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**Testimony of David Sutherland – Director of Government Relations
Before the Energy and Technology Committee – March 1, 2016**

**Regarding Bill 5427
*AN ACT CONCERNING THE SHARED CLEAN ENERGY FACILITY PILOT PROGRAM***

On behalf of The Nature Conservancy, I would like to express our concerns about a critical provision of Bill 5427, and our conviction that this legislature and the Governor's administration must do all it can to hasten the implementation of a broad, full-fledged Shared Clean Energy Program in this state.

We would favor the adoption of a broader program with no, or a much bigger, program enrollment limit than the six megawatts currently mandated in PA 15-113. Several states either have no enrollment limit or a larger one for their Shared Solar programs. If the General Assembly will not adopt such a program, however, and if this legislation is the most expeditious way to move the pilot program forward, it should be enacted, but only with a crucial change to Section 2(6)(d).

Section 2(6)(d) specifies that the term for tariff mechanisms cannot exceed fifteen years. A fifteen-year term would likely render projects financially infeasible and the pilot program inoperable. In its report on Shared Clean Energy Facilities issued last March, the Connecticut Academy of Sciences recommended:

"The EDC [Electric Distribution Company] shall be required to enter into a Power Purchase Agreement for the electric energy produced by any SCEF [Shared Clean Energy Facility] located within its service territory consistent with the SCEF Program Rules, including that the term of such agreement shall be for the life of the SCEF."

We recommend that the term be "the projected life of the facility or 25 years, whichever is a shorter length of time".

In determining that it did not have the authority to rule on certain aspects of PA 15-113 for which DEEP had asked it for clarification, PURA suggested that DEEP consider implementing the Pilot program using C.G.S. § 16a-3i (d), or seek clarification from the legislature. We would urge the DEEP to pursue both a determination of the feasibility of using 16a-3i(d), and this clarifying legislation, and to use whichever will speed implementation the fastest.

PA 15-113 and this legislation point out the need for a comprehensive study on the value of solar and other distributed energy resources to analyze the costs and benefits that different such resources provide to the electric grid system, natural resources, greenhouse gas emission goals, electric distribution companies and ratepayers. We urge the legislature to authorize and determine a funding source for such a study.